

Message Text

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ORIGIN ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 H-01 SCS-03 L-03 SNM-02 SSO-00
PRS-01 PA-01 /022 R

DRAFTED BY ARA/AND:MR.LEVINE
APPROVED BY ARA:WHLUERS
H:CCUTTER (INFO)
SCS:RDAVIS(INFO)
L:LFIELDS (INFO)
ARA/AND:MR.BARNEY
S/NM - MCHESHES (INFO)
-----102357Z 124445 /13

O 102133Z MAY 77 ZFF4
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY LA PAZ NIACT IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY CARACAS IMMEDIATE

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CARACAS AND BUENOS AIRES FOR ASST SECRETARY TODMAN

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: CASC, BL

SUBJECT: U.S. CITIZEN PRISONER ISSUE

REF: BARNEBEY/BEALE TELCON OF 5/10/77

SUMMARY: ON MORNING MAY 10, PARENTS OF U.S. CITIZEN
PRISONERS HELD PRESS CONFERENCE AT RAYBURN BUILDING ON THE
HILL. IT WAS AN EMOTIONAL SESSION IN WHICH PARENTS PRESSED
FOR INCREASED USG PRESSURE ON BOLIVIA TO RELEASE THEIR
CHILDREN. THEY PRESENTED LIST OF DEMANDS WHICH INCLUDED
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RECALL OF AMBASSADOR STEDMAN, CONGRESSIONAL INVESTIGATION,
AND USG REQUEST THAT GOB CONSIDER AMNESTY OR DEPORTATION.
SENATOR JAVITS' AIDE IMPLIED TO GROUP THAT IF THERE IS NO
PROGRESS, JAVITS MAY CALL FOR HEARINGS. END SUMMARY.

1. STAFF AIDE TO SENATOR BENTSEN CALLED ARA LATE MORNING
OF MAY 10 TO REPORT ON JUST CONCLUDED PRESS CONFERENCE HELD

BY PARENTS OF U.S. CITIZENS IMPRISONED IN BOLIVIA. HE COMMENTED THAT CONFERENCE WAS SKILLFULLY CARRIED OUT, WITH SOBBING PARENTS, REPORTS OF THREATENED SUICIDES BY DESPONDENT PRISONERS, AND LARGE ATTENDANCE BY PRESS INCLUDING TELEVISION CREWS. WE HAVE HEARD FROM ANOTHER STAFFER THAT VERY FEW CONGRESSMEN WERE PRESENT.

2. ACCORDING TO BENTSEN AIDE, THE ONLY CONSTRUCTIVE DEVELOPMENT WAS INTERVENTION OF AIDE TO SENATOR JAVITS WHO TOLD GROUP OF ASSISTANT SECRETARY TODMAN'S IMMINENT VISIT AND PROBABILITY THAT HE WILL TAKE UP PRISONERS ISSUE WITH GOB. AIDE IMPLIED THAT IF NO REAL PROGRESS WAS EVIDENT IN NEAR FUTURE, JAVITS WOULD ASK SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE TO HOLD HEARINGS ON ISSUE. BENTSEN'S AIDE SAID THAT SENATOR BENTSEN WOULD LIMELY SUPPORT JAVITS' REQUEST.

3. SENATOR BENTSEN'S OFFICE IS SENDING ARA TEXT OF A TELEGRAM ABOUT PROBLEM FOR TRANSMITTAL TO ASSISTANT SECRETARY TODMAN. WE WILL CABLE TEXT AS SOON AS WE RECEIVE IT.

4. PARENTS ARE SAID TO HAVE GRUDGINGLY ACKNOWLEDGED THAT SOME PRISONERS ARE GUILTY OF DRUG OFFENSES, BUT OTHERS ARE INNOCENT (FRYER CASE CITED AS EXAMPLE). THEY INSISTED THAT ALL HELD BE BROUGHT TO TRIAL AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. PARENTS ALSO PRESENTED LIST OF "DEMANDS". ABRIDGED AND UNOFFICIAL SUMMARY FOLLOWS:

-- IMMEDIATE RECALL OF AMBASSADOR STEDMAN. HIS PAST LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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INDIFFERENCE AND INDEED COMPLICITY IN THE SUFFERING OF OUR CHILDREN NOW FATALLY PERMEATES THE DIPLOMATIC ATMOSPHERE IN BOLIVIA(SIC).

-- AN INDEPENDENT AND COMPLETE CONGRESSIONAL INVESTIGATION INTO THE PRISONER PROBLEM IN BOLIVIA.

-- THE RELEASE OF OUR CHILDREN, SPECIFICALLY:

A. FOR THOSE PRISONERS WHOSE RECENT SENTENCES ALREADY QUALIFY THEM FOR RELEASE UNDER THE TERMS OF BOLIVIAN NARCOTICS LAW, WE DEMAND THAT OUR GOVERNMENT WORK FOR THEIR IMMEDIATE RELEASE.

B. FOR THOSE PRISONERS WHO ARE BEING HELD WITHOUT ANY TANGIBLE EVIDENCE AND WHO HAVE NOT YET BEEN SENTENCED, WE DEMAND THAT OUR GOVERNMENT WORK FOR THEIR IMMEDIATE RELEASE.

C. FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE PRISONERS, WE URGE THAT OUR GOVERNMENT SEND A HIGH-LEVEL EMISSARY TO BOLIVIA AT THE EARLIEST POSSIBLE DATE TO EXPLORE THE WILLINGNESS OF THE BOLIVIAN GOVERNMENT TO CONSIDER EITHER AMNESTY OR DEPORTATION.

5. DEPARTMENT WILL INFORM BOLIVIAN CHARGE TODAY OF RESULTS OF PRESS CONFERENCE.

6. ACTION REQUESTED: AS DISCUSSED IN TELCON WITH DCM, AMBASSADOR SHOULD INFORM THE GOB, AT THE HIGHEST APPROPRIATE LEVEL, OF THE CONTENTS OF THIS CABLE. PLEASE TRANSMIT BY IMMEDIATE CABLE ANY ADDITIONAL LATE DEVELOPMENTS IN INDIVIDUAL CASES, OR OF ANY CHANGE IN GOB ATTITUDES RE THIS PROBLEM. CHRISTOPHER

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